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● Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

35TH YEAR

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Home Gardening

"Where" Does Your Garden Grow?

Approximately six million acres were used for home gardens in this country in 1977, but, for many home gardeners, the traditional back or side yard near the house was not "where" the garden grew. The decline--but not necessarily an answer why--in using the household yard appeared in figures gathered during the past three years in a U.S. Department of Agriculture survey. In 1975, 85 percent of the home gardens were in the family yards; in 1976, 75 percent and in 1977, 69 percent. About one in ten gardens were located on relatives' or friends' lands.



People living in the south, northeast, north central and west and those living on farms had gardens located on their land--but away from the house. Respondents also indicated that the number of households growing fruits and vegetables appears to be increasing slowly, but, the size of the gardens appears to be increasing more rapidly.

One family in ten (of the 1400 households interviewed) said someone in their household grew fruits or vegetables in "containers" in 1977 (including window boxes). The survey showed that about 11 percent of the respondents used containers as well as plots, according to Evelyn Kaitz, social science analyst, Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service.

Tomatoes still rank as the number one vegetable for home gardeners, but the percentage of households growing tomatoes in 1977 dropped by 6 percent from the 1976 level. Radishes and green onions (scallions) also decreased--only 50 percent of the households grew them compared with about 59 percent earlier. Potatoes and cabbage crops increased by about 10 percent, according to home gardeners interviewed.

In gardens in the north central area, asparagus, broccoli, carrots, lettuce, and rhubarb were more likely to be found in gardens; in the west, household gardeners were more likely to grow strawberries than those in the northeast, north central or south, according to the survey.

As the ages of the respondents increased it became more likely that beets, cabbage and turnips would be grown, and, you'd be less likely to find corn in the home garden. As the level of the respondents' education increased cabbage, okra, potatoes, and turnips were less likely to be in their 1977 household garden. Proportionately, in households where the respondent had a higher level of education, broccoli, which is beginning to show up in more gardens than in the past, was more

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HOME GARDENING (CON'T.)

likely to be found. As total family income increased, asparagus and broccoli were more likely to be grown in the household garden and potatoes and greens less frequently.

Overall, the respondents interviewed in this three-phase survey in 1975-76-77 showed that fruit and vegetable gardening is closely related to the national economy. According to this report, the approximate value of the fruits and vegetables grown in household gardens climbed from approximately \$10 billion in 1976 to \$14 billion in 1977.

FOOD CLIPS

Hamburger and other ground meat should be cooked thoroughly because it is handled often in preparation and germs get mixed into it. Raw ground meat should not be eaten, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture home economists.

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Check the label when you buy a ham. Some hams need to be cooked; others are already fully cooked and can be eaten as they come from the store. If you are in doubt---cook it!

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The best way to thaw frozen meat is in the refrigerator. However, if you must thaw meat outside the refrigerator, put it in a sealed plastic bag under cold running water. The idea is to get products warm enough to thaw but remain cool enough to slow down germ growth---particularly on the surface of the meat.

USDA Nutrition Posts

Audrey Tittle Cross, a nutrition consultant in San Francisco, has been named nutrition coordinator for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Cross will coordinate human nutrition activities within the Department, with other federal agencies, private institutions, professional societies, and international organizations.

Dr. D. Mark Hegsted, professor of nutrition at Harvard University, was recently named administrator of the Human Nutrition Center of USDA's Science and Education Administration. Hegsted will supervise USDA's in-house human nutrition research and coordinate its extramural research and extension programs in the field of human nutrition.

Herbert Mangrum is the acting head of the newly-created Office of Community Liaison in the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA. He formerly served as a deputy administrator in the Food and Nutrition Service.

ABOUT YOU 'N' ME

Laura Lane, contributing editor for the Farm Journal magazine, is well acquainted with farming as a husband-wife business. She has worked for equal property rights for women and estate tax relief for farm widows, and now has written the "Farm Journal's Estate Planning Idea Book" on how wives' interest can be protected.....The American Medical Association's Department of Foods and Nutrition will sponsor a conference on sodium and potassium in American foods, Nov. 2-3 at Washington, D.C. (Mayflower Hotel).